



## KUKA Powers Up with Sage Abra and PerformancePAM

**Customer:**  
KUKA Assembly and Test Corp.  
Saginaw, MI  
[www.kuka-at.com](http://www.kuka-at.com)

### Company Profile:

**Industry:** Power train transmission assembly & testing  
**Locations:** 2  
**Employees:** 160

"The old manual performance review process was so cumbersome that half of our supervisors refused to use it!"

That was the reality of the situation at KUKA Corporation, a provider of powertrain automated assembling and test manufacturing systems with design and build facilities in Saginaw and Fenton, Michigan. KUKA began as a small machine shop 50 years ago, and remained a "mom and pop" business selling factory automation to manufacturers until about ten years ago when they were acquired by a large multinational corporation. "Our management realized that if it continued to just offer pieces of machinery, we'd quickly be reduced to a Tier Two provider. But, if we moved into providing complete turnkey assembly and systems, we could remain Tier One," explains Mark Kloha, human resources manager.

The strategy paid off. Through acquisitions and other changes, KUKA has become the market's largest provider of automated assembly and test systems to the auto and transportation industries.

### Streamlining with Sage Abra

With growth, however, came a need for more sophisticated human resource processes. Paper and spreadsheet based systems became unmanageable. Mark determined to automate the department, and implemented Sage Abra HRMS, including payroll, benefits, recruiting and training modules.

"Sage Abra has definitely sped up all of our internal systems," says Mark. "We now have considerably less paperwork. We went from five databases down to just one. Also, Abra lets us track all of our contractors on the system for training purposes, something that was never possible before. Contractors often double the size of our company, so this is an important benefit."

### Remedy for Performance Reviews

Sage Abra worked so well, in fact, that Mark decided to wrap performance appraisals into the system. "Our employee review process was broken. I wanted to fix it, in a way similar to how Sage Abra was fixing the rest of the department. So I did an Internet search. My goal was to find something that would eliminate databases rather than create even more of them."

### Challenge

Manual performance evaluation system was time-consuming, frustrating and poorly accepted by employees

### Solution

Sage Abra HRMS with PerformancePAM, automating entire HR department and review process

### Results

Compliance with new performance evaluation system is nearly 100%; evaluations now take just a quarter of the time required previously



Development Partner



"Performance reviews can now be done in just one quarter of the time it was taking before."

Mark Kloha  
Human Resources Manager, KUKA

Mark found PerformancePAM Talent Management. It was developed specifically for Sage Abra systems, and therefore integrated seamlessly with KUKA's Abra database. The company launched PerformancePAM in late 2005, and has been delighted with the results.

### Easy Electronic Reports

Before autumn evaluations, KUKA managers define rating criteria to update profiles for each type of position. They use specific language, depending on whether their reports are for supervisors, accounting, administrative, engineering, union, IT, management, or production control employees. The profiles are then used to create electronic review forms.

When it's time for the review, managers receive an email notifying them that evaluations are now available. On their computers, they score employees according to competency factors, add comments, and email the evaluation to their supervisor for approval. Supervisors click to approve, and send the evaluation up one more level.

The department head, in turn, clicks on the "approved" box, if appropriate, and the form goes automatically to human resources for final review. "We check every performance appraisal to make sure it is accurate and does not violate labor laws," says Mark. "We print out a paper copy for the supervisor, who discusses it in a private meeting with the individual employee. And that's it!"

### Custom Installation

PerformancePAM representatives became part of the KUKA team during implementation, helping the company create a custom

system that would meet their exact needs. "PerformancePAM was very supportive through the entire process," says Mark. "Obviously, a custom solution requires a lot of hands-on work. They were right here beside us the whole way."

### Close to 100% Compliance

How has PerformancePAM changed things at KUKA? "For one thing, we now have performance reviews on everyone. Before, supervisors just couldn't be bothered. Now we're almost at 100 percent compliance," Mark says.

"Part of the reason is that performance reviews can now be done in just one quarter of the time it was taking before. This is a phenomenal improvement, which everyone appreciates," he continues.

"Furthermore, with the old system we ended up trying to rate every aspect of a position by job description. The criteria grew over time, so there could be as many as 27 essential functions. Descriptions got way too long. PerformancePAM helped us get a grip on this issue, and be more consistent across departments."

After using PerformancePAM for a year, Mark decided to appraise the tool itself. He asked managers throughout the company if they wanted to return to the old paper-based employee evaluations. "Boy, did I ever get an earful," he says. "Everybody really likes what we're doing now with Sage Abra and PerformancePAM. There's no way we'd ever go back!"



Development Partner

Copyright© 2011 PerformancePAM. Sage, the Sage logos, and the Sage product and service names mentioned herein are registered trademarks or trademarks of Sage, Inc., or its affiliated entities. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.



PerformancePAM  
Talent Management